



**ROUTE 9 COMMUNITY TASK FORCE
MEETING REPORT
APRIL 2, 2002**

Task Force Attendees:

Susan Banel (for Snohomish County Councilmember Jeff Sax)
Katherine Batts
Gary Hajek
April MacFie
David MacFie
Pete Rose
Debby Niceley
Mike Renzelmann
John Schmied
Aaron Feik
Corinne Hensley
Charles Blaine
Chardel Blaine
Geoff Clayton
Deborah Rannfeldt
Gregory Stephens

King County Staff:

Michael Popiwny
Debra Ross

Facilitator:

Margaret Norton-Arnold

Norton-Arnold & Company:

Fala Frazier

Observers:

Maine Tonkin
John Quast
Mary Filkins
Gary Freeman
Nancy Stafford
Bob Schneider
Jeanette Knutson

Introduction

The meeting began with introductions. Michael Popiwny, King County Siting and Mitigation Manager gave an update on the Brightwater project. Margaret Norton-Arnold, meeting facilitator, reviewed the mission, scope of work, and ground rules for the Task Force. She noted that the Task Force is meant to be an informal working group, and that a primary purpose of the Task Force will be to advise King County on the most effective mechanisms to continue to involve the public throughout the remainder of the site selection process. The Task Force will also assist in the planning of informational seminars and community design workshops.

The meeting focused on two subject areas. First, Margaret asked members to share what they were hearing in the community: what are the major issues and concerns that your neighbors are talking about in relation to the siting of Brightwater? Second, Margaret asked members to provide advice on the ways in which King County might be more effective in its public involvement efforts.

General Questions

Below are questions and comments that Task Force members had after the presentation by Michael Popiwny:

- Are there examples of plants that have conveyance systems as long or longer than 23 miles?
- Is the Route 9 site in a 100-year floodplain?
- How much of the Route 9 acreage is in the Urban Growth Boundary?
- Is there an “EIS Scoping Process for Dummies”? It would be helpful to understand the specifics around the EIS process.
- The aerial photos of the Route 9 and Edmonds sites should be done to the same scale.
- Is one site better than another with regards to earthquake concerns?

WHAT ARE YOU HEARING IN THE COMMUNITY?

Task Force members discussed the concerns, rumors, and questions they hear in their communities regarding the Brightwater project. The comments below reflect this discussion.

- There is a lot of misinformation floating around. Public meetings can be a good way to give out correct information, but you have to make sure people actually attend them. There is a general mistrust of government as a whole.
- Odors are a top concern. Route 9 is in a u-shaped valley and air gets trapped here. The odors from Stock Pot Soups, for example, travel widely.
- Impacts to air quality are also a top concern; what kinds of chemical or noxious emissions will there be, and what are the effects on people's health?
- What about the potential for chemical or sewage spills?
- There is concern about impacts to young children regarding a possible increase in bacterial or viral infections.
- People are worried about their property values going down. It was noted that there have been impacts already, even with only rumors of the plant going in here. How do we recover from this economic damage?

- Noise pollution and vibration are concerns. Some people are worried that sounds and vibrations could carry to the hillside.
- Traffic congestion during construction started out as a high priority concern, but this has dropped off somewhat. People have recognized that Brightwater may not cause as much traffic impact as other potential land uses.
- Care needs to be taken when we begin to discuss multiple uses for this site. Other joint-use options might not be appropriate or welcomed, such as a bus barn, jail, or transfer station.
- The design of the plant is a concern. What will its visual impact be, and how will the buffering be designed? The buffers need to be adequate. Also, because this is an industrial zone – there is concern that the plant will be designed to the lowest possible industrial guidelines.
- Cost is an issue. There is a public fiscal responsibility here. Why would you pick Route 9 given the assumption that it will cost significantly more to build it here than at the Edmonds site?
- Mitigation for mitigation needs to be considered. Sportsfields, for example, have nighttime lighting associated with them.
- Mitigation is a real gray area. We need a precise definition for mitigation: what are the requirements; how do decisions get made; who is accountable for it? We also need to have a community agreement in place that spells out what kind of mitigation, who's responsible, and when it will be put in place. This agreement should also be specific regarding design, odor control, and mitigation during construction.
- There are worries that the plant will put pressure on the urban growth boundary, which would change the rural character of the area surrounding the Route 9 site.
- Brightwater should include on-site surface water management.
- If there is to be other development on the site, it should be low-impact development.
- The surrounding community is primarily on septic systems, and many of these residences aren't even hooked up to a wastewater treatment system. And yet, that community will bear the impacts of the new plant. There is also concern that those on septic will have to hook up to the wastewater system.
- It was noted that it would be important to know what the growth plans are for Woodinville, Maltby and Bothell -- with or without the plant?
- One rumor is that a decision has already been made to put the plant at Route 9, and people have heard that there are emails from legislators that hint at this. This kind of information encourages mistrust in the process.
- It has also been heard that there are sweetheart deals being made, and that property buy-outs are underway to financially compensate certain people for their support of the plant.
- Those of us who live in this unincorporated area are concerned about lack of representation in the process. How can we negotiate as effectively as an elected body such as the Edmonds City Council can?

ADVICE ON PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT TECHNIQUES

Discussion took place on the public involvement plan for Phase Three of the Brightwater siting process. Members were asked to share their concerns, ideas, and advice; as well as other questions or comments they may have. The notes below reflect this discussion.

- At the public meetings, use graphics and current factual information to educate people. Use booths with information. Let people take the information they want and draw their own conclusions.
- Provide a list of the “right” questions to be asked/answered at the public meetings. Give people some guidance on what they should be asking, who they should be talking to, etc.
- Take time to better define the public who will be most affected by this plant. For example, we need to create a place for youth to appreciate their place, including water reuse and other science subjects. Involve youth in this process.
- Within a certain radius of the plant there should be property tax reductions to compensate for our current loss in value. Identify and document these losses and do something about them.
- Provide more clarity on the costs associated with the plant.
- Be responsive. Let people know that their concerns are being heard and how you are going to deal with those concerns. Tell people how you will address impacts.
- Hold seminars on specific topics, e.g. odor control, economic issues, ongoing maintenance. Bring these meetings close to the community, don’t make people to only come to you to get educated. Go to where the people are; schedule yourselves on a consistent basis at places like the Maltby Café, schoolhouse, or the grange. Continue a dialogue; this will help build a body of knowledge within the community.
- Provide bus tours of other wastewater treatment facilities.
- Put a local project office in the area so the neighborhood can drop in on a regular basis, talk to people, and get the information they need.
- Bring in someone who lives around another wastewater treatment facility to help us learn about the reality of ongoing impacts as a treatment plant neighbor. It would be helpful if the site was more like Route 9 than the Vancouver plant is.
- Do a better job of highlighting the positive things that Brightwater could provide and that the community wants, such as salmon restoration.

Next Steps

The next meeting of the Route 9 Task Force will be held on Tuesday, May 14th at 7:00 p.m. at the Wellington Elementary School Library. The meeting on May 14 will also include discussions related to the upcoming EIS scoping hearings and design workshops. We will also talk about how the questions and suggestions raised at the Task Force meetings will be responded to, and will have some responses available at the May meeting.